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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON IRAQ, NOVEMBER 18, 2003

1. Article in Tegucigalpa-based liberal daily "La Tribuna" on 11/18 entitled "Troops are stationed in low risk zones in Iraq". "After a short visit to Iraq to supervise the work of the Honduran troops in that country, the Minister of Defense Federico Breve said that the Honduran troops have received all the support they require from the coalition forces."

"Breve also said that the Honduran troops have been deployed in one of the most peaceful zones on the Najaf region. Breve added that he had the chance of joining the troops on some of their missions to verify that the risk they face is minimal."

2. Article in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Herald" on 11/18 entitled "Honduras will withdraw its troops if they face any danger". "After returning from a short visit to Iraq, the Minister of Defense Federico Breve said that President Maduro would consider the possibility of withdrawing the Honduran troops from Iraq or re-station them in a safer place if the risks they face increase in any way."

"Breve said, we will really need to evaluate our presence in Iraq. we won't take any unnecessary risks. Thus, if we are aware that the risks to our troops increase, we'll assess our presence in Iraq. If the lives of our soldiers are in any danger, there's a chance to bring them back, or re-station them somewhere else."

Palmer